



Committed to the future of rural communities.

USDA Rural Development: Telecommunications Program;

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program (DLT) – Alabama

Glenwood Inc./ Indian River Mental Health

Need:

In the counties of Bibb, DeKalb, Pickens, Jefferson and Tuscaloosa, Alabama there was a need for telemedicine services to local schools and health centers for serious mental illness, substance disorders, autism, and other intellectual disabilities. Also needed were distance learning and video conferencing capabilities and equipment. These resources are needed for outreach training for the care of the people with the above disabilities. The training would be given to the families and community to improve the health of the community. The training would also benefit the teachers with students who have autism and behavioral issues that need special care.

How Rural Development Helped:

In 2009, Glenwood, Inc. was awarded a USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant for \$334,067. This funding provided the equipment for distance learning and telemedicine services for Jefferson and DeKalb counties in Alabama. This amount will fund video conference equipment for 6 schools covering a 2-county area creating an interactive video network with an emphasis on services for autism and behavioral health. The resources and connectivity will enable teachers and counselors and students to better address their challenges by connecting to other linked networks and professionals.

In 2010 Glenwood, Inc. received another Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant in the amount of \$353,488. These funds were allocated to Bibb, DeKlab, Pickens, and Tuscaloosa counties. Glenwood, Inc. will be partnering with Autism and Behavioral Health Center and Indian Rivers Mental Health Center to provide telemedicine services for mental illness, substance disorders, autism, and other intellectual disabilities at schools and health centers. Video conferencing equipment will be installed and community outreach and training for families or professionals will be available to improve the communities' health.

Results:

According to the grantee, the project funded by the 2009 grant has been very successful. Three training sessions will be held in July 2011 for all special education personnel throughout the 128 school systems to understand the value of the Training and Consultation services in the management of behaviors of students. These sessions will provide the information on the actual content of the training and consultation, the presentation of behavior management examples and success and finally how to ensure that the school systems know how to make the sessions a reality in the upcoming academic year. The grantee is also exploring other ideas such as podcasts and other techniques to help school personnel in the area of restraint and de-escalation of potential crises in the classroom. Many other ideas have surfaced in order to improve the quality and quantity of the educational opportunity for students with special needs especially in those rural schools where resources are very limited but where connectivity is just a click away. The use of the technology should increase exponentially over the next year.